

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01
SSC-01 /052 W
-----100844Z 120863 /17

R 071445Z JAN 77

FM AMCONSUL STUTTGART

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3297

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

USMISSION USBERLIN

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C O R R E C T E C C O P Y A D D E O , T A G A S , S U B J

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT GW

SUBJ: GENSCHER TAKES ON SPD AT BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG EPIPHANY
MEETING

1. SUMMARY. FREE DEMOCRATIC PARTY CHAIRMAN GENSCHER TOOK POT
SHOTS AT BOTH BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG AND NATIONAL SPD IN FEA-
TURED SPEECH IN TRADITIONAL THREE KINGS' MEETING IN STUTT-
GART ON JANUARY 6. FRENCH LIBERAL JEAN DURIEUX FAILED TO LIVE
UP TO ADVANCE BILLING IN WHAT WAS TO HAVE BEEN MAJOR SPEECH.
MEETING THAT WAS LONG ON RHETORIC AND SHORT ON SUBSTANCE RE-
ELECTED ENTIRE FDP LEADERSHIP TEAM INCLUDING LAND CHAIRMAN
MARTIN BANGEMANN. PARTY MEETING CONSIDERED DULLEST AND MOST
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UNINSPIRING IN RECENT YEARS. END SUMMARY.

2. SPEAKING AT TRADITIONAL EPIPHANY MEETING OF BADEN-
WUERTTEMBERG FDP IN STUTTGART ON JANUARY 6, FEDERAL FOREIGN
MINISTER AND FDP NATIONAL CHAIRMAN HANS-DIETRICH GENSCHER,
IN TRYING TO DEPICT FDP AS INDEPENDENT FORCE, NOT ONLY
ATTACHED CDU, BUT ALSO WARNED BONN COALITION PARTNER SPD

AGAINST "FORCES IN SPD THAT WANT TO REDUCE FDP INFLUENCE IN COALITION". LIBERALS WERE NOT JUST A MEANS TO HELP SPD TO GET A MAJORITY WITH WHICH IT COULD MAKE SOCIALISTIC POLITICS. IN COMMENTS NOT IN HIS PREPARED REMARKS, GENSCHER ATTACHED BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG SPD CHAIRMAN DR. ERHARD EPPLER ESPECIALLY STRONGLY, SAYING EPPLER WAS BEST GUARANTEE THAT SPD WOULD NOT REACH MAJORITY IN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG, AND THAT EPPLER HAD BEEN GREATEST CDU ASSET IN RECENT ELECTIONS.

3. DESPITE SOMEWHAT STRIDENT TONE AGAINST SPD, GENSCHER, NEVERTHELESS, DEFENDED COALITION WITH SPD ON FEDERAL LEVEL. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT COALITIONS WITH CDU ON LAND LEVELS COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED A FEDERAL SIGNAL WHICH IS FREQUENT MESSAGE DELIVERED AT FDP LAND CONVENTIONS IN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG.

4. GENSCHER WARNED AGAINST POPULAR FRONT (VOLKSFRONT-BUENDNISSE) AND SO-CALLED EURO-COMMUNISM WITH WHICH COMMUNISTS TRIED TO SNEAK IN THE BACK DOOR. THIS WAS MORE DANGEROUS THAN "OBVIOUS BYZANTINISM OF GERMAN COMMUNISTS WHO OPENED UMBRELLA IN BRIGHT SUNSHINE ONLY BECAUSE OF RAIN IN MOSCOW."

5. GENSCHER PLACED MOST OF HIS FOREIGN POLICY EMPHASIS IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT. HIS PREPARED REMARKS CONTAINED NO SPECIFIC MENTION OF THE US WHICH CAME ONLY WHEN HE MADE THE FAMILIAR COMMENT ABOUT BERLIN BEING THE "PROOF STONE" OF DETENTE.

6. FOR FIRST TIME IN OVER 100-YEAR HISTORY OF EPIPHANY MEETINGS, A FOREIGN POLITICIAN SPOKE AT PUBLIC MEETING: THE CHAIR-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MAN OF THE LIBERAL FACTION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, FRENCHMAN JEAN DURIEUX. IN ANNOUNCING A COMMON ELECTION PLATFORM OF THE LIBERAL PARTIES OF EUROPE FOR THE DIRECT ELECTION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN 1978, HE FAILED TO GENERATE MUCH MORE THAN A POLITE RESPONSE. DURIEUX'S PRESENCE AT THE CONVENTION HAD BEEN BILLED IN ADVANCE AS A RATHER SIGNIFICANT EVENT.

7. ELECTION OF NEW LAND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HAD BEEN PRECEDED BY HEATED DISCUSSION IN RECENT WEEKS. ONLY AFTER PROMISING NOT TO RUN AGAIN IN 1979 WAS DR. MARTIN BANGEMANN REELECTED LAND CHAIRMAN, GETTING ONLY 262 VOTES WITH 111 AGAINST HIM AND 24 ABSTENTIONS. STATE SECRETARY IN FEDERAL AGRICULTURE MINISTRY GEORG GALLUS, KLAUS ROESCH AND HINRICH ENDERLEIN WERE ALL REELECTED, BUT ALL WITH CONSIDERABLY FEWER VOTES THAN TWO YEARS AGO. SURPRISE CANDIDACY FOR ONE OF THE DEPUTY CHAIRMEN POSITIONS BY BUNDESTAG DEPUTY AND STUTTGART KREIS CHAIRMAN FRIEDRICH HOELSCHER FAILED. HOELSCHER CONSIDERED TO BELONG TO THE LEFT WING OF THE FDP. 31-YEAR OLD CHAIRMAN OF

9-MAN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG LANDTAG FACTION DR. JUERGEN MORLOK IS EXPECTED TO SUCCEED BANGEMANN AS LAND CHAIRMAN IN 1979, SINCE PREVIOUS CONVENTION PASSED RESOLUTION THAT A LAND POLITICIAN SHOULD HEAD LAND ORGANIZATION BEFORE ANOTHER LANDTAG ELECTION.

COMMENT: MANY MEDIA AND OTHER OBSERVERS, INCLUDING SOME FDP OFFICIALS, CONSIDER THE JANUARY 5-6 SESSION THE DULLEST AND MOST UNINSPIRING THREE KINGS MEETING EVER HELD AND DOUBT WHETHER THE BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG FDP HAS THE LEADERSHIP RESOURCES TO LIFT THE PARTY OUT OF THE DOLDRUMS. IT IS A STUDY IN CONTRASTS FOR THE BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG FDP, WHICH NEVER FAILS TO TROP OUT THE OLD TIME LIBERALS FOR PUBLIC HOMAGE, TO HAVE TO TURN TO THE 31-YEAR OLD JUERGEN MORLOK AS ITS NEXT LIKELY LEADER. WHILE MORLOK MAY HAVE A BRIGHT FUTURE, HE HAS NOT YET HAD TIME TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HE IS A MAN OF PROVEN ABILITY. THE ELECTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD (VORSTAND) PROVED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OR SETTLED NOTHING EXCEPT, PERHAPS, THAT ALL THOSE REELECTED HAD LOST SUPPORT IN THE PARTY. THE VORSTAND WAS LEFT, AS BEFORE, WITH ONE BANGEMANN FRIEND (ROESCH), ONE ENEMY (ENDERLEIN), AND A THIRD (GALLUS) WHO IS NOT HEAVILY INVOLVED IN THE GRUBBINESS OF POLITICS ON THE LAND LEVEL. THIS CAN ONLY MEAN THAT THE PERSONAL CONFRONTATIONS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG FDP IN RECENT YEARS ARE LIKELY TO CONTINUE FOR AT LEAST THE NEXT TWO. THE INTENSITY OF THE BICKERING MAY BE REDUCED, HOWEVER, AS BANGEMANN WITHDRAWS FROM THE LAND LEVEL AND CONCENTRATES MORE ON EUROPEAN POLITICS. GENSCHER'S ATTACK ON THE SPD IN GENERAL AND ON BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG SPD CHAIRMAN ERHARD EPPLER CAME AS SOMETHING OF A SURPRISE. IF NOTHING ELSE, IT TARNISHED GENSCHER'S LOCAL PUBLIC IMAGE AS A MAN A BIT ABOVE THE BATTLE SINCE HIS BLAST AGAINST EPPLER WAS CONSIDERED BY MANY LOCAL OBSERVERS TO BE DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO BELOW THE BELT. GENSCHER, HOWEVER, MAY HAVE FELT THAT HE WAS ON PRETTY SAFE GROUNDS SINCE IT IS NO SECRET THAT THERE IS LITTLE LOVE LOST BETWEEN CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT AND EPPLER. IT IS ALSO NOT INCONCEIVABLE THAT GENSCHER ATTACKED EPPLER AT SCHMIDT'S URGING OR AT LEAST WITH HIS BLESSING SINCE EPPLER HAS BEEN GETTING CONSIDERABLE PRESS PLAY LATELY AS A CRITIC OF SCHMIDT. CONTRARY TO ALL OF HIS PREVIOUS THREE KINGS APPEARANCES, GENSCHER DID NOT HAVE TO CONTENT WITH CATCALLS AND INTERRUPTIONS DURING HIS SPEECH, WHICH MAY BE MUTE COMMENTARY ON THE FDP'S CURRENT PUBLIC STANDING IN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG.

JENKINS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SPEECHES, MEETING REPORTS, POLITICAL PARTIES, POLITICAL LEADERS, PARTY MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STUTT00036
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770014-0930, D770007-0588
Format: TEL
From: STUTTGART
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770170/aaaaciya.tel
Line Count: 166
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 338430dc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3641044
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GENSCHER TAKES ON SPD AT BADEN-WUERTEMBERG EPIPHANY MEETING
TAGS: PINT, GE, (GENSCHER, HANS-DIETRICH), (DURIEUX, JEAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/338430dc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009